

PENISTONE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED.  
31ST DECEMBER, 1944.

of  
THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH - DR. ALFRED A. MASSER.

Mr. Chairman & Members,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report on the health of Penistone, for the twelve months ended Dec. 31st, 1944. Owing to the untimely death of the late Medical Officer of Health, Dr. A. G. Wilson, at the end of the first six months of the year, my report must necessarily be brief.

I propose first, to give the vital Statistics of the Penistone Area, followed by remarks on General Hygiene, Housing, Water Supply, and Infectious Diseases.

Births. The estimated population of the Penistone District in 1944 was 5,858. During the year there were registered 126 live births, comprising 51 males and 75 females. This gives a birth rate of 21.5 per 1,000 of the population. The birth rate for England & Wales was 17.6 per 1,000, so that we can consider our birth rate well above the average for the whole Country.

Of the live births, 2 males and 9 females were illegitimate. While under normal peace conditions this figure might be considered high, it is not unduly so, when we consider War conditions, and that troops of many nationalities were stationed here during most of the War.

There were 4 still births registered. It may be of interest to note, that none were illegitimate, and all were males.

Infantile Mortality. 3 Infants died under the age of one year; of these 2 were legitimate, and 1 illegitimate, giving an infantile mortality rate of 23.8 per 1,000 live births. This compares very favourably with that for England & Wales, namely, 46 per 1,000 births. I regard the low infantile mortality rate in Penistone due to the frequency of breast feeding among the mothers, and the healthy Country surroundings of the area.

Deaths. There were 78 deaths in the Penistone Area during 1944. Of these 42 were males and 36 females. This gives a death rate of 13.3 per 1,000. This compares with 11.6 for England & Wales. I attribute the higher than average death rate, to the large proportion of elderly and aged people in Penistone, many of whom died at ages ranging from 70 to 86 yrs.

Of the deaths, 2 males died of Influenza; 5 males and 3 females died of Cancer. The number of deaths from Heart Disease, appears high, these comprising 10 males and 17 females. 1 Female death was due to suicide, and 2 males and 2 females died as a result of other violent causes.

No death occurred from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, a great tribute to the healthy atmosphere and conditions of life in Penistone.

Water. This consists of 4 Artesian Wells and 4 Springs. The supply has been satisfactory in both quality and quantity. Of 10 Bacteriological examinations made, only one proved unsatisfactory. This was on Nov. 29th, from water collected from Dunford Bridge from a sump after passing the sand filter, but before reaching the chlorinator. A further test carried out later, proved satisfactory.

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A recent Chemical Analysis showed the iron content of our water to be high, namely 0.05 grains per gallon. The total solids in the water is high. The temporary hardness of the water is also high, being 10.44 degrees. I have urged the Council that everything should be done to render our water less turbid, and with a lower degree of hardness.

The provision too of a further source of water supply, to provide for a growing population, should also be borne in mind.

Housing. The Rateable Value of Penistone for 1944 was £30,164. Penistone Urban District covers an acreage of 5,593 acres. Arrangements are being carried out for the building of new houses on the Park Avenue, Green Rd., Westfield Avenue, and Royd Lane Estates. Extensions of these modern estates will be the most beneficial and economic way of building our new houses.

Nutrition. This remains good in both children and adults, in spite of the years of War. The general incidence of disease has been low, and infectious disease has been of a mild character.

Infectious Diseases. 39 Cases of Infectious Diseases were notified during the year 1944, as follows:-

Scarlet Fever.	12.
Acute Lobar Pneumonia.	2.
Cerebro Spinal Fever.	1.
Dysentery.	1.
Erysipelas.	4.
Respiratory Tuberculosis.	1.
Measles.	1.
Whooping Cough.	17.

The following cases were removed to an Isolation Hospital:-

Scarlet Fever.	12.
Cerebro Spinal Fever.	1.

Immunisation. It is a great tribute to the Penistone population, that so large a proportion of the children were immunised against Diphtheria. The fruits of this are seen in the absence of even one single case of Diphtheria throughout the year, this excellent result having occurred in the last two successive years. We must see to it, however, that this high standard of immunity is continued in the year 1945.

There seems little doubt that a free service must soon be made available for immunisation against Whooping Cough, not probably the second greatest scourge in the early years of our children. This could easily be administered together with the injection against Diphtheria.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) ALFRED A. MASSER, M.B. Ch.B.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.